

EXHIBIT 1

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June 1, 2021

Honorable Brian Cogan
United States District Court
Eastern District of New York
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Judge Cogan:

I make no excuse for my crime as my actions are inexcusable. I own my crime. My arrest has forced me to take a hard look at myself in the mirror and through therapy and working a 12-step program, I am learning how to be thoroughly honest with myself. In this *meditation*, I humbly seek to share with this Honorable Court what I have learnt about myself and with my newfound knowledge, the steps that I am undertaking to try to become a better person.

I now know that the actions for which I was arrested were not "uncharacteristic" events, but an almost "inevitable" culmination of a progression of poor personal judgments. I have now come to realize that I was "deluding" myself that I was leading a very "*normal*" and "*successful*" life. In fact, over the years, to give myself the false reassurance that "*everything was just right*," I would constantly take a personal inventory. In my mind, my checklist always needed to be complete: "*Happily*" married to a woman, six amazing, healthy children together, a rewarding job and an upstanding member of my tight-knit religious community.

Yet, in reality, my life has been anything but "*normal*." I realize now that sadly, although superficially I was leading a very '*happy*' life, beneath the surface I was living two overwhelming and complicated lives simultaneously. I was the "*perfect*" husband, father, doctor, community member on most good days, or so I thought; while being an addict at all other times. I kept this second part of my "*double life*" hidden from everyone. I lied to my wife, my family, my colleagues, my patients, my community, and most importantly and to a large extent, to myself as well. I compulsively engaged in sexual fantasy and acts, yet I denied to myself the magnitude of what I was doing.

My need for sex as a "drug" knew no bounds. If I would ever acknowledge to myself what I was truly doing, it would disgust me and I wouldn't be able to live with myself. How can I, a religious married man be engaged in such lewd activity? How can I be so unfaithful? Yet, my brain craved this "drug" and so I lived in delusion about what was happening, how often it was happening, and how powerless I had become to it. To feed my compulsion, I learnt how to "*compartmentalize*" and lied to myself that I was successfully "*juggling*" it all; engaging in addictive behavior, while falsely convincing myself that it was not having any effect on the rest of my work/family life. I fooled myself that I wasn't hurting anyone, not even myself. In reality, it was as if I was living two separate lives; 95% loving husband, father, and doctor; 5% addict.

Childhood:

Although evidence has shown that to a certain extent we are molded by our childhood upbringing, what actual effect, if any, it has on one's upbringing may at most be an explanation, but not an excuse. My reference to my childhood, is not meant to deflect the blame to others, but to better understand how I came to be responsible for the actions I have carried out. As a means to cease and desist from continuing these actions, I have spent much time over the past year and a half trying to gain some insight into my own unhealthy adult mentality.

I love my parents unconditionally. From my entry into this world, they have certainly tried to provide for me in every possible way, and since my arrest, they have taken me back into their home and have been my sole-source of financial support. I can never stop showing them gratitude for this and so much more. Yet, in looking back at my childhood in therapy, I now know that, being raised by an overbearing mother and an emotionally-absent father has contributed to the molding of who I have become.

My Mother, as the child of an Auschwitz survivor, loved me in the only way that she knew how. Having herself grown up in a traumatized home, she "smothered" me, involving herself in my every need. "Overbearing" can mean different things to different people, but for me as a child, it meant that my mother exerted control over me and criticized my every choice that I tried to make independently. Although it was certainly not her intention, I saw her constant and incessant meddling as a lack of empathy and respect for me. I believed that her love for me was conditional.

My mother was unable to relinquish control not only over me, but over all her loved ones' every move. My mother made all the decisions in the house, and her word was always the only and final word. In regards to my father, she either did everything for him or directed him on how and when it should be done. My father, in turn, kept quiet on all matters, more than happy to play the role of a distant second fiddle.

As a very young child, I always loved my father for what I thought was his ability to be so non-partisan and neutral. But as I got older, my misperception of his dispassion and disinterest in everything important to me, or anyone else for that matter, made me feel uncomfortable around him. I felt that my father was not smart, not *manly* and I sought out his respect and affection less and less often.

Through my therapy work, I am now able to better understand that my mother's love for me was not only unconditional, but that she had more love for me than twenty mothers combined for all their children. And for the first time, I am able to see that my father had tremendous tolerance and love for my mother and was willing to forgo his own respect to keep the peace at home. However, growing up, my childhood eyes missed all these understandings.

My Struggle with my Sexuality:

I have same-sex attraction. There I said it! I have always felt it from as long back as I can remember and I likely will have it with me until the day I die. But I never could just get those four words out of my mouth. As a devout Orthodox Jew, my religion encompasses every aspect of my entire universe. It is the basis of my family and my community. More so, practically every action I take in my daily living is *done for, because of,*

or is influenced by the way I practice my religion. Yet, homosexuality has no place in this equation. It just cannot co-exist with *anything* and *everything* that I otherwise hold to be true and valuable. I must choose one of the two; either my religion or my sexuality; yet, how can I? Prior to my arrest, this conundrum has never left my mind. I have been carrying on this conversation now in my head for over 35 years.

And as much as I acknowledge that my same-sex attraction is a part of me, for me thus far it has always been *'unwanted.'* It would be so much easier if I wanted it. *Over the years, I so badly wanted to want it.* But as much as I have engaged in sexual activities with same sex partners, thus far it has brought me no real satisfaction or the true connection I was always looking for. It has only made me feel more empty, and yet, I couldn't stop doing it.

Most importantly, what I have come to realize is that, unlike most people, my same sex attraction is not likely based on something healthy, normal or desirable. I have come to understand that possibly as I was not able to get the male validation and love I so desperately needed from my emotionally-absent father, I had turned towards my male friends for what I was missing. I also now understand that my misperception of my mother's conditional love, the mistrust my childhood mind has falsely perceived, had psychologically extended to a deep mistrust with all women. Without even realizing it, I had turned away from and feared deeply connecting with any woman and more and more, desperately and pathetically sought out the validation and affection of men in an unhealthy way.

I finally understand why the language of *homosexuality* as a *natural expression* and *personal right* has never worked for me. I envy those who experience their own *homosexuality* differently than the way I do. I wish I could be that way. Uniquely for me, as much as I have tried, It has thus far not played a healthy role in my life. This understanding has become one of the central aspects of working my recovery in my 12-step addiction program. I have finally been able to concede that for me, my same-sex attraction instead of playing its role as another subset of who I am, has become the primary component of an addiction; my 'drug' and my means of 'escape.'

After my arrest, I was almost left dumbfounded about how in so many other ways I considered myself so *'successful,'* and yet I was so caught up in my addiction and was really living in *insanity.* In fact, this question made me deny a lot of my reality at first. I now understand that as a person who carried around a deep secret, never far from my conscience, it was as if I was always doing my best to *'pretend that everything was normal.'* I learned how to always know the right thing to say, the right thing to do, and the right way to act. In many ways, life felt like a game that *I did not ask to play* and that I believed *I would be forced to play until the day I died.* With time I got so good at the game of playing *'normal'* that I started to forget that I was playing this game. Over time, I had let down my guard until my insanity replaced the "normal" I was supposed to be playing, my compulsivity took over and my two lives shattered and collapsed together.

Somewhat surprisingly, as a physician, It was so natural and easy for me to connect with my female patients on a professional level, but I realize now that it was because our doctor-patient relationship was a specific level of a connection in which I was fully able to be real. Sadly, my greatest failure was in regard to my now ex-wife. Despite her always being there for me and offering me everything I've emotionally desired, I lacked the ability to deeply and truly connect with her. I have cheated her out of a life with a *'normal'* husband, as I was no more than someone that was *'trying his best'* to be one.

Growing Up and Getting Married:

Going back to my early years as a teenager in high school, I engaged in a few clumsy and not well understood same-sex sexual encounters. I felt tremendous shame and yet, within a short time I would return back to these actions. It gave me a certain high and it was my escape.

When I was engaged to be married, as elated I was, I was wracked with anxiety about whether my past sexual experiences would affect my marriage. Although I was completely forthcoming about my concerns, most of the professional and rabbinical advice I was given was to "just get married and everything will be fine." I was reassured that I was "just like everyone else" and everything would just straighten itself out with my first sexual encounter with the opposite sex on my wedding night. I so badly wanted to relieve myself from my inner turmoil and I allowed myself to accept a false sense of hope and happiness.

In listening to multiple 'shares' in SA meetings from other sex addicts, the above theme always repeats itself. We all thought our sexual issues would just go away when we got married, and we were all almost shocked when that didn't happen. Most of the members of my 12-step fellowship openly speak of the fact that after entering marriages, their compulsion for lust and sexual fantasy not only didn't diminish, but were exacerbated, as they felt further isolated when they were unable to make the true connections with their spouses.

My wife and I were married for 22 years. We have hundreds of pages of photo albums attesting to all the wonderful places and activities that I believed we had 'joyfully' shared together. But I realize now that throughout those 22 years, I was sincerely able to delude myself that my marriage has been one of "complete bliss" in which I was the 'perfect' husband and provider. I now realize how much I had been lying both to myself and my wife. With my arrest, my wife has taken the only possible action, to immediately separate and divorce me.

In regards to my love for my family; it is all real. I never doubted it and I do not question it even today. It was and remains true and even stronger to this day. I really believed that I was fully giving of myself to my six children and my now ex- wife. I realize now, that although I had no reason to think otherwise, in truth, as I was not able to be truly honest with them, I was not giving them the true connection they deserved. The true connection may have been lacking but my feelings of love were not.

Specifically to my ex-wife, I have hurt her so badly and there is no longer any time or opportunity to give back even one percent of what I owe her. Selfishly, I wish that my ex-wife and I could start over; that with my newfound knowledge of myself, with my new commitment to recovery and sobriety I could just make up for the past and be the honest and true husband to her that I should have always been. Sadly, I must admit that this illogical thinking is nothing other than one more 'fantasy' that I can no longer unhealthily engage in.

Compulsion and Addiction:

I have always been known for my quick thinking, ability to make fast decisions, stick to them and carry them out at all costs. In fact, I have always prided myself in these characteristics. As a surgeon and obstetrician, my quick impulses have literally saved lives. In my office, counseling thousands of patients, my absolute conviction in most of my decisions has always given my patient's the confidence

to accept my suggestions, leading them for the most part to be quickly cured of their illnesses and ailments.

In truth, I have now come to realize that my quick, reactive nature so full of self-confidence has been no more than a 'double-edged sword.' I realize now that although certainly beneficial at many times, outside of the Operating Room and in my medical decision making, it was at times a sharp and dangerous tool when not used properly. In my own personal life, too many times I have been too quick to act, too overly sure of myself, and despite not achieving the desired consequences of my actions, got stuck in my egocentric thinking.

Many times, when engaged in conversations, negotiations or just plain discussions I would persist to try to get my point across. I would repeat my argument, over and over again, assuming each time, that if I could just get the other person to understand, they would see it my way. At times, I refused to admit that my premise might have been wrong. Other times, my point may have been truly valid, but I would fail to recognize that my need to prove my point had overtaken the importance of the point itself. My need to persist at times was working against me.

But there is no greater area in which my 'compulsivity' has worked against me than when it came to my ability to deal with the effects of 'lust.' Over the years, I began to endlessly seek out sex more and more often, and began taking greater risks to get it. I hated myself for it, yet I couldn't stop. I prayed to G-d, begging him to take these thoughts away. But as with any compulsive need, the craving did not just go away. Instead, it became like a demon, an overpowering voice in my head, demanding to constantly be heard and acknowledged. The noise in my head kept getting louder and louder until it became a constant scream.

To the outsider, I must have appeared to be a successful person living a normal and meaningful life. But in truth I was living in 'insanity.' I had become a slave to lust. My every free moment was spent looking to fulfill my lust needs. I had become exactly as the 'White book' (the SA fellowship book) describes the 'Sexaholic.' It was as if I *"had lost control, no longer had the power of choice and I was not free to stop. Truly, the only way I knew to be free of it was to do it."*

Particularly, in my need to keep all my activity a secret, I could never search for sex in the open, where there are some norms and boundaries. My need to remain undercover moved me to look clandestinely for sex over the internet and physical hidden places where there are no rules, no filters, and no norms. Without my realizing, set boundaries easily became blurred with time.

My 'acting out' did not make me feel any better. Hours were wasted invested in trying to arrange anonymous meetings that always became a meaningless, quick and anonymous sex act. As soon as it was over, I felt guilty, dirty and nauseated. I just wanted to puke and to shower and wash away my guilt and disgust. But worse than that, it always left me feeling even more empty and dejected. I would easily swear it off, telling myself that I would never do it again; but within a few days, the compulsion would come back even stronger, and it was almost as if I was forced to seek out and repeat the same negative behavior, falsely telling myself that the next time would be different.

'Denial' became a necessity to my very existence. I continued to live in two worlds, one with the potential for fulfillment and happiness and one of sinking into utter disgust and regret. I deluded myself that I was

functioning just fine; that I was fully present with my family. I convinced myself that I could stop; just one more "hook-up" and I will be done. In truth, the progression was relentless and I was completely unaware of the extent it was driving me and to where it was leading me.

Accepting Responsibility:

Although I have now come to understand some of the outside factors that may have contributed to the molding of the person that I have become, I absolutely do not seek to pass the blame on to anyone else, or to look back on any personal turmoil I may have endured, as an excuse for my actions and decisions. They were my decisions and actions; I solely must and do own them. And the fact that my acting out has never brought me any true happiness, certainly doesn't make me less guilty for it.

And although I can say with a certainty that my actions in the time frame before my arrest were brought on by compulsion and my complete powerlessness to the effects of lust, again, that does not deflect from me any of the responsibility for what I have done. Truth be told, I thought I wasn't always powerless. There was a time, (*though now many years ago,*) when I was still able to honestly understand that something was very wrong; when I knew that my actions and thoughts were not in line with the moral life I was trying to lead. Yet, I always told myself that I could stop and would stop after the next time. I didn't. It is I alone that allowed my illness to progress.

As a matter of fact, I did try and did want to stop. I had sought out multiple forms of therapy over the years, seeing different therapists and professionals. I even participated in a 'Gay Conversion therapy' group for over 18 months. Unfortunately, I was either too blind to or in complete denial that my problem was that of addiction; that I was no longer in control of myself, that I was leading a double life. Instead, I always told the therapists that my problem was only the incompatibility of my homosexuality and my family/religious lifestyle. I refused to listen to my therapists' suggestions that I was a slave to addiction. As long as I lived in denial, no one could help, because I couldn't be helped.

Consequences:

The consequences of my actions have been overwhelming. I have hurt two underage victims and their families. I have engaged in a sexual act with them, and given their young age they did not have the ability to understand the ramifications of these actions, and to willingly consent. I make no excuses. I take full responsibility for my actions and any ramifications my actions have caused them. As a father, I can understand the pain I have brought to them and their parents. I sincerely pray that they be able to grow into healthy adults and still meet their full potential.

I have no ability to make amends to them in person. If they were to ever read this I would want them to know that I harmed them by my actions and for that I am sorry. I would ask them how it affected them and apologize for that and I would ask them how I could make it up to them and follow their suggestions.

I have brought destruction to every member of my immediate and extended family. I have brought endless shame to my wife of 22 years, my six innocent wonderful children, my parents and brother, and all the members of my in-law's family. My shameful actions will always be attached to all of them, no matter how far they may try to run.

I have robbed my ex-wife, not only of a husband (flawed and all,) but I have stolen from her what should have rightfully been hers, a true sense of self. By my actions, I have denied her the basic principle of marriage, that of a trusting partnership. Her self-dignity has been robbed from her by me, her husband, who was supposed to have been her protector of everything that is basic to her.

I have stolen from my children not only their hands-on father, but their youthful innocence and sense of security that until now was taken for granted. Additionally, I have seriously threatened their ability to marry and continue to flourish within our tight-knit Jewish community. They are all innocent. They have done nothing wrong. They have all loved me unconditionally. I have caused them terrible pain. They will be suffering the negative consequences of my actions for years to come, likely forever.

I have let all my friends and colleagues down. My medical patients have been left suddenly abandoned and they have lost the benefit of a years-long established patient-doctor relationship. I have brought shame to all the medical institutions and organizations that I previously had so proudly associated with. I have brought tremendous gossip and pain into my tight-knit community.

Truly, the damage I have caused to others is insurmountable and unbearable at times. I must painfully accept the fact, that many of those that I have hurt, for now or forever, no longer want me as a part of their lives. I must remember that, especially in regard to my ex-wife and my older children, though I was certainly the cause of their *problem*, that does not give me the right to be a part of their *solution*. If I truly want to be helpful to them, if I truly want to do their will, then the only thing I could do for now is respect their wishes to give them the space for now that they have asked for. I have far from yet accepted this painful, but necessary truth.

With regard to myself, with my arrest, in every facet of my life, I am no longer the same person. I am no longer an upstanding community member, no longer a doctor, no longer a husband, and although, I am still a father, for now my interaction with my children is limited. At the same time, I realize that I no longer need to be the same person in terms of my unhealthy relationship with sex. I finally have been given the rude awakening I have so desperately needed. Since then, with the above changes, I dedicate my every day to no longer being enslaved by sex, no longer acting impulsively, no longer engaging in any form of illicit sexual activity. 20 months is far from enough to declare a person a "changed man," but it is a first step of many.

My Commitment to Recovery:

Admittedly, the first 3 months or so after my arrest was a time of paralysis and fear. I was far from ready to process the reality of what had happened, how much I had hurt others, and I certainly was not ready and able to even begin to honestly look back at my life thus far. Since then, I have slowly started to understand what had led me to bring so much damage and pain to so many people.

Hours and hours of therapy are slowly starting to replace years and years of delusion and denial. It is impossible to pinpoint exactly when my conscious decision making turned to compulsion. In truth, even if I was to return the clock back to mid 2019 before I engaged in the compulsive actions that directly led to my arrest, it would be of little benefit. The only way to undo the damage that I have caused would be to turn the

clock back 35 years ago, when I first consciously decided to engage in my first sexual encounter. Sometime after that, it just became too late. I now know, that the only way I can change, the only way I can become the person I was always meant to be, is to completely let go and 'surrender' the fact that the way I have been doing it until now was simply all wrong. I need to begin again, learning for the first time the proper way to live.

Over the last year and a half, I have been trying to do everything I can, dedicated to my singular goal of full rehabilitation. Weekly, I attend two sessions with a therapist who specializes in Sex Addiction Therapy in which I am being fully honest about my past and have become openly receptive to his observations of my past. I am also under the care of a psychiatrist that I follow up with approximately every six weeks. I have been diagnosed with an 'Impulse Control Disorder,' and though most specifically, the diagnosis was given to me with regards to my sexual acting out, I know that it manifests in my every-day life. I am practicing simple things, such as counting in my head before responding to simple requests, sitting for days on important decisions and asking others for advice.

I keep to a rigorous daily schedule. My day is divided between working on addiction recovery through numerous 12-step meetings, reading recovery literature and engaging with my sponsor, sponsees and other fellowship members. I try to fill the rest of my day engrossed in Jewish religious studies on all different subjects, but with a strong emphasis on repentance and self-improvement. I strictly adhere to a set curriculum, studying alone, with local rabbis and study partners, all in-person or virtually.

I now know that my issue may have started as a conundrum and impossible reckoning of my sexual orientation, but it had then morphed into an over encompassing issue in my absolute powerlessness to sexual acting out. With my understanding that I am a sex *addict*, I am for the first time taking the proper steps to control it. I am fully integrated into the 12-step Fellowship program and with my secret now revealed, I am able to benefit from the rigorous honesty demanded of the program. I share my shameful story with my fellows. As part of a fellowship, I have new strength and hope and the accountability I needed. Most of the members of my fellowship have been sober for years, and I stick tightly to them.

The program recommends starting with a "90/90," committing to 90 days of sexual sobriety and attending one meeting daily for those days. I have just passed my 574th day of sobriety, and since joining the program I attend approximately 6-7 meetings weekly. My strict definition of "sobriety" is that of no form of sex; i.e. no masturbation, pornography or sex with others outside a committed and trusting relationship. Kicking an old habit can be a lifetime's work, but at this point, it is far from a conscious struggle and has become a natural way of living. I pray for G-d's help to keep me sober one day at a time.

I have already been contacted by more than a handful of others and I now realize that I am far from alone or unique in my struggle with unwanted same-sex attraction and sexual compulsion, especially and specifically within my own religiously-restrictive Orthodox Jewish community. As much as I would love to return to practicing again as an OB-GYN physician, admittedly it is probably not a reality. In truth though, I have become inspired about the world of recovery and I hope to share my own experiences (*and if given the opportunity to enroll in a degree program, the professional knowledge I will obtain*) to help others. I hope to make whatever small impact I can, even if it is limited to no more than one less addict, one less destroyed family, and one less victim of a sexual crime.

I can never undo the damage that I have caused to so many others and knowing that I solely bear the

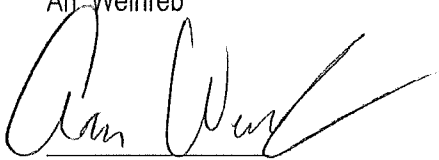
responsibility of that damage is a pain that I will carry forever. For now, for many of the loved ones that I have hurt, the most I can do is respect their wishes to give them the space they need. I vow to continue to change my actions, although for those I hurt it may be too late.

As for myself, I must accept all my own personal losses as the consequences of my poor choices and actions. I vow to learn from them. I must remember that I am a sex addict and I will always be one. The *temptation* may never go away, but the *Obsession* need not control me. I have been given a complete toolbox of ways to stay ahead of my compulsivity. I will forever need to think twice before making and carrying out any decision. I have a fellowship that I must stick with.

I may need to be in therapy forever, and that is just fine with me. With G-d's help, I have no choice but to work on my recovery, one day at a time, for the rest of my life.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ari Weinreb



6/1/21